

beginning to find ways to rebuild immune systems destroyed by HIV so that those infected can live longer, healthier lives; and we are aggressively confronting this crisis with prevention programs at the grassroots and national levels.

But there is still much work to do. Half of all new infections occur among people under the age of 25, and one-fourth occur among teenagers. We must protect the next generation by continuing to improve the availability of health care services for those with HIV and AIDS. Since 1990, the Ryan White CARE Act has offered help and hope to hundreds of thousands of people, and we are working with the Congress to extend this vital program for an additional 5 years. However, while the CARE Act is an essential element of the safety net that protects people with HIV and AIDS, it cannot do the job alone. We must also maintain our 30-year commitment to the Medicaid program, which provides services to nearly half of all Americans living with AIDS and more than 90 percent of children with AIDS. Without the protection that Medicaid affords, these individuals and their families would lose all access to health care.

Let us also continue to ensure that our Nation responds aggressively and humanely to the needs of people living with HIV and AIDS. Throughout this epidemic, community organizations have taken the lead in the struggle against the disease and in efforts to provide compassionate care to those in need. Across this country and around the globe, generous people perform miracles every day—holding a hand, cooling a fever, listening, and understanding. Let us further support their efforts to build a better world by strengthening the partnership between communities and government in the work to stop AIDS.

The theme of this eighth observance of World AIDS Day, "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities," is a call to fight against discrimination as strongly as we fight for a cure. When one human being is persecuted because of his or her HIV status, we all suffer. Let us pledge to stand together, united against HIV and AIDS and committed to ending ignorance and prejudice.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 1, 1995, as World AIDS Day. I ask the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combatting HIV and AIDS and in reaching out to all those whose lives have been affected by this disease.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 4.

Remarks on Lighting the City Christmas Tree in Belfast, Northern Ireland

November 30, 1995

Thank you very much. To the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, let me begin by saying to all of you, Hillary and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making us feel so very, very welcome in Belfast and Northern Ireland. We thank you, Lord Mayor, for your cooperation and your help in making this trip so successful, and we trust that, for all of you, we haven't inconvenienced you too much. But this has been a wonderful way for us to begin the Christmas holidays.

Let me also say I understood just what an honor it was to be able to turn on this Christmas tree when I realized the competition. [Laughter] Now, to become President of the United States you have to undertake some considerable competition. But I have never confronted challengers with the name recognition, the understanding of the media, and the ability in the martial arts of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.

To all of you whose support enabled me to join you tonight and turn the Christmas tree on, I give you my heartfelt thanks. I

know here in Belfast you've been lighting the Christmas tree for more than 20 years. But this year must be especially joyous to you, for you are entering your second Christmas of peace.

As I look down these beautiful streets, I think how wonderful it will be for people to do their holiday shopping without worry of searches or bombs, to visit loved ones on the other side of the border without the burden of checkpoints or roadblocks, to enjoy these magnificent Christmas lights without any fear of violence. Peace has brought real change to your lives.

Across the ocean, the American people are rejoicing with you. We are joined to you by strong ties of community and commerce and culture. Over the years men and women of both traditions have flourished in our country and helped America to flourish.

And today, of course, we are forging new and special bonds. Belfast's sister city in the United States, Nashville, Tennessee, was proud to send this Christmas tree to friends across the Atlantic. I want to thank the most prominent present resident of Nashville, Tennessee, Vice President Al Gore, the Mayor, Phil Bredesen, and the United States Air Force for getting this big tree all the way across the Atlantic to be here with you tonight.

In this 50th anniversary year of the end of World War II, many Americans still remember the warmth the people of Northern Ireland showed them when the army was stationed here under General Eisenhower. The people of Belfast named General Eisenhower an honorary burgess of the city. He viewed that honor, and I quote, "as a token of our common purpose to work together for a better world." That mission endures today. We remain Americans, and as people of Northern Ireland, partners for security, partners for prosperity, and most important, partners for peace.

Two years ago, at this very spot, tens of thousands of you took part in a day for peace, as a response to some of the worst violence Northern Ireland had known in recent years. The two morning papers, representing both traditions, sponsored a telephone poll for peace that generated almost 160,000 calls. In the United States, for my fellow Americans

who are here, that would be the equivalent to 25 million calls.

The response left no doubt that all across Northern Ireland the desire for peace was becoming a demand. I am honored to announce today that those same two newspapers, the Newsletter and the Irish News, have established the President's Prize, an annual award to those at the grassroots level who have contributed most to peace and reconciliation. The honorees will travel to the United States to exchange experiences on the issues we share, including community relations and conflict resolution. We have a lot to learn from one another. The President's Prize will underscore that Northern Ireland's two traditions have a common interest in peace.

As you know, and as the First Lady said, I have received thousands of letters from schoolchildren all over your remarkable land telling me what peace means to them. They poured in from villages and cities, from Catholic and Protestant communities, from mixed schools, primary schools, from schools for children with special needs. All the letters in their own way were truly wonderful for their honesty, their simple wisdom, and their passion. Many of the children showed tremendous pride in their homeland, in its beauty, and in its true nature. I congratulate the winners. They were wonderful, and I loved hearing their letters.

But let me tell you about another couple I received. Eleven-year-old Keith from Carrickfergus wrote, "Please tell everyone in America that we're not always fighting here and that it's only a small number of people who make the trouble." Like many of the children, Keith did not identify himself as Protestant or Catholic and did not distinguish between the sources of the violence.

So many children told me of loved ones they have lost, of lives disrupted and opportunities forsaken and families forced to move. Yet, they showed remarkable courage and strength and a commitment to overcome the past. As 14-year-old Sharon of County Armagh wrote, "Both sides have been hurt. Both sides must forgive."

Despite the extraordinary hardships so many of these children have faced, their letters were full of hope and love and humor.

To all of you who took the time to write me, you've brightened my holiday season with your words of faith and courage, and I thank you. To all of you who asked me to do what I could do to help peace take root, I pledge you America's support. We will stand with you as you take risks for peace.

And to all of you who have not lost your sense of humor, I say thank you. I got a letter from 13-year-old Ryan from Belfast. Now, Ryan, if you're out in the crowd tonight, here's the answer to your question. No, as far as I know, an alien spacecraft did not crash in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. [Laughter] And Ryan, if the United States Air Force did recover alien bodies, they didn't tell me about it, either, and I want to know.

Ladies and gentlemen, this day that Hillary and I have had here in Belfast and in Derry and Londonderry County will long be with us as one of the most remarkable days of our lives. I leave you with these thoughts. May the Christmas spirit of peace and good will flourish and grow in you. May you remember the words of the Lord Mayor, "This is Christmas. We celebrate the world in a new way because of the birth of Emmanuel: God with us." And when God was with us, he said no words more important than these, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the Earth."

Merry Christmas, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:45 p.m. outside Belfast City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Lord Mayor Eric Smyth of Belfast, and his wife, Frances Smyth.

Remarks at a Reception Hosted by Sir Patrick Mayhew in Belfast *November 30, 1995*

The President. Thank you.

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. The plane for America leaves tomorrow morning. I want you to be on it. [Laughter] We'll take you back.

Thank you, Sir Patrick and Lady Mayhew. And thank you, Sir Patrick, for your tireless efforts for peace in Northern Ireland.

I want to thank the Vice Chancellor, Sir Gordon Beveridge, and everyone here at

Queen's University for allowing us to meet at this wonderful place in the year of its sesquicentennial celebration. I am delighted to be here. And I'm also delighted that it was given to me the honor to make a little announcement involving Queen's. Under the auspices of the Fulbright program, named after the late Senator from my home State, J. William Fulbright, who gave me my first job in public life, we are establishing a distinguished Fulbright lecturer program here at Queen's University to bring distinguished Americans to share their experiences and their ideas with their academic colleagues here and to reach out to the community throughout Northern Ireland.

Let me say that Hillary and I are delighted to be here with a very large contingent of Americans from all walks of life and from both political parties. I am delighted to be the first American President ever to visit Northern Ireland while serving as President. And I think all of you here know that I would, given the choice, never miss a chance to go to an exciting place and make new friends. But the real reason I'm here is because of the hard work and the tough choices that many of you in this room have made to advance the cause of peace and reconciliation in this land. And I thank you for that.

I will take away from this visit a lot of enduring memories, a lot of lasting impressions of peace. When we were at the Mackie plant this morning, it really struck me as a symbol of Northern Ireland's rebirth since the cease-fire. On the shop floor, men and women who come to the plant by separated gates still, work together side by side with common goals for their families and their communities.

I went to the Enterprise Park in East Belfast, and I met with tenants and managers who were making the most of their ideas, their potential, assisted, among other things, by the International Fund for Ireland.

I went to Londonderry where we had an extraordinary crowd, and I saw the splendor of that beautiful old city wall, and also the remarkable Statue of Reconciliation there, which is also a sharp reminder. If you've seen it, you know there are two tall figures with their hands outstretched, but they're not quite touching yet. And of course, tonight